



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

**For Immediate Release**

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### Cooling assistance offered to needy families

*-Application deadline is Aug. 16-*

**Richmond** – Applications for cooling assistance from the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) Energy Assistance Program (EAP) will be accepted through Monday, Aug. 16, at local departments of social services.

“The heat and humidity of the summer months can be extremely dangerous for small children and for the disabled and elderly,” said VDSS Commissioner Maurice A. Jones. “Some households require assistance with cooling expenditures. We want people to know that this program is available to help.”

Assistance is available to households with children under age six, a disabled adult or an adult age 60 and over, that meet income and eligibility requirements, said Andrea Gregg, manager of the Energy Assistance Program.

Cooling assistance can be used to assist families and individuals with:

- payment of electrical bills to operating cooling equipment;
- payment of security deposits for electricity to operate cooling equipment;
- repair of a central air conditioning system or heat pump;
- purchase of a whole-house fan, including ceiling or attic fans; and
- the purchase and installation of a window unit air conditioner for households where there is no unit or the unit must be replaced.

To be eligible for cooling assistance, certain criteria must be met. In Virginia, the maximum gross monthly income to qualify for cooling assistance is \$1,009 for a household of one and \$2,042 for a family of four.

EAP is funded by a federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program block grant. The fuel component has been in existence since 1979 and serves approximately 98,000 households each year, while the crisis component serves approximately 16,000 households. During the summer of 2003, the cooling component served approximately 32,000 households.

To learn more about the Energy Assistance Program visit

<http://www.dss.state.va.us/benefit/energyasst.html>. Families and individuals must apply by Aug. 16 at their local department of social services.

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